WOMAN'S WITCHCRAFT

Clara J. Moore,—

With compliments of

The Authoress.

WOMAN'S WITCHCRAFT:

OR

THE CURSE OF COQUETRY.

A Dramatic Romance.

BY

CORINNE L'ESTRANGE.

Puck.—Now shall two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
For those things do best please me,
That befall preposterously.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

PHILADELPHIA:
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SCENE—THE PYRENEES, IN SPAIN; TIME, A. D. 1715.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

PHILIP V.—King of Spain.
CALVAR—Duke of Bilbao.
DON ALONZO—a Young Nobleman, travelling in the guise of a Student.
ABDALLAH—a Moorish Knight.
ROMULO—a Chief of Banditti.
GABRIEL—a Young Priest.
PIETRO—a Shepherd.
CARLOS—Page to Donna Viola.
SILVIO—Gate-keeper to the Castle of Algolar.

WOMEN.

DONNA VIOLA—Lady of the Castle of Algolar, near the Pyrenees.
OLIVIA—Cousin to Donna Viola, afterwards Duchess of Bilbao.
HELENA—Waiting-Maid to Donna Viola.
ISMENA—the White Witch of the Pyrenees.

Chorus of Evil Spirits, etc. etc.

NOTE.

Although *historical accuracy* is not pretended to in this if in any similar composition, it may be mentioned that, according to the chronicles of Spain, King Philip V. lost his queen, Maria Louisa, by death, in 1714; and that he then for a time withdrew from the affairs of government, confiding them entirely to the Cardinal del Giudice, a Neapolitan. C. L.

WOMAN'S WITCHCRAFT.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A dark night on the Pyrenees*—ISMENA, *the Witch of the Mountains, alone, with a flaming pine branch in her hand.*

Ismena. Grim night—and clouds, and storms—I welcome you!

Even as when—ages gone—the soft, warm heart
Of womanhood was mine, I welcomed friends!
Ye, only, make me half forget this curse
Of being, which doth punish me. Roll on,
Thou deep mouthed thunder—nearer! Let me bathe
My soul amid thy terrors, which are joys
To this undying, yet death-thirsting nature!
Now,—to my task. Ye that do love this night—
More dire and terrible in your secret spells
Than forkéd lightnings—spirits that leap from hell
To find a mocking heaven in human hearts
Which ye can torture—gather near me now!
There's work for you.

Voices of Invisible Spirits. Amen!
Rise we, to curse earth again!
Ismena. Come, come, come!
Voices. 'Tis well!
We haste hither from our hell.
Thou hast might to bid us come,
Were a paradise our home.
Other Voices. [*Above, below, and around.*
We come, we come!
Midnight yields her blackest pall
To engird us; and, with all
Damning powers of ill and hate,
That can make earth desolate,
Witch, upon thy will we wait.
Ismena. Hear, then, and aid!
Ye, who forget not, know the unwreaked curse
That waits on her who lords it 'mid these hills,
Mistress of yonder castle. A deep curse
Ye promised me.
Voices of Spirits. We promised,—and fulfil.
Ismena. The time draws on. Left lonely by the death
Of father and of mother—in yon halls
And o'er these wide domains, she meets no will
Save ours, to thwart her. She has longed for *love;*
Ay, with free heart, hath sought it; it has come.
That love must die. Over her newborn sleep
I breathed the words: "The heart her heart shall seek,

She shall not find; or, winning, rue the prize.
One love shall never fill her heart; insate,
She still shall win and lose; be loved, and love,
Yet find in life no peace—*until Heaven's power*
Shall conquer ours!"

First Voice. *This* do we dread!

Second Voice. Then, pile our curses on her head!

Third Voice. What shall they be?

First Voice. No early blight—
But a too dangerous beauty's light;
No lack of power, no loss of charm—
But love, her own and others' harm;
A smile, that wounds like dagger-stroke;
Soft words, to rend the heart of oak;
All that gives most of joy in life,
To be to her the soul of strife;
All woman's wiles, and more than they,
To fix, to fasten, and betray;
Be *these* her bane; if these shall fail,
Our witchcraft may no more avail!

Chorus of Evil Spirits.

Away, away! the charm has spread;
Rest beauty's curse upon her head!

Ismena. 'Tis well! [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A room in the Castle of Alyolar*—DONNA VIOLA *seen reclining upon a couch, with* HELENA, *her maid, kneeling by her to arrange her hair.*

Donna V. Methought the Duke should have been here ere now.

Helena. Not yet, my lady; it is barely noon.

Donna V. Noon, say'st thou? Why, these walls look dull as night.

Alas! mine eyes take shadows from my thoughts;
All things seem dark without, when sad within.

Helena. Then soon, I trust, your noon will shine again.

Donna V. I trust, but yet my heart aches with its fears.
Didst ever love, Helena?

Helena. Yes, my lady.

Donna V. Thou didst! And was thy gentle true to thee?

Helena. He was, till death.

[H. *rises, and goes to the window.*

Donna V. Ah! then thou ne'er hast known
These horrid doubts; these fears, that shake the heart
Like earthquakes; thou hast never known the hour
Creep slowly on, when he thou watchest for
Should come, and yet he comes not—never known
Those nights of peopled fantasy,—when dreams
Place him thou lovest in some rival's arms,

Greeting thine ears with scorn! O men, vain men!
Ye should be *angels* in your kindlier hours;
So, only, might ye heal the wounds love makes
In woman's bosom. Comes not Carlos yet?

Helena. Not yet; but, climbing o'er yon farthest hill,
Methinks I see his horse.

Donna V. Is't not the Duke's?

Helena. No, madam.

Donna V. Let me look; it *must* be he!

[DONNA V. *rises, and goes to the window.*

How slow he moves,—as though the steed were worn
With weary travel, or his rider's heart
Pressed heavily with some grief. 'Tis not the Duke.
No lover thus could to his mistress ride!
Love's step hath wings, feathered with joyous thoughts;
'Tis melancholy moves with leaden stride.
Why lags the page so long? Doth he not know
I bade him hasten with his news? By heaven,
I'll find some speedier knave to serve my errand!

Helena. Pardon, my lady; if unwished-for tidings
Burden his mind—

Donna V. O, tell me not of that!
I cannot bear it! Thou dost not think *him false?*
Say, *canst* thou think it? O, are the sweet hours
Of youth and love so easily forgot?
Are all our hopes—all the fond vows we swore—

Broken forever? I'll not believe in Heaven,
If he, who seemed so true, now play me false!

[*Enter the page*, CARLOS.]

Carlos, thou shouldst have brought a world of news, to be
So long in bearing it. What of the Duke?

Carlos. Madam, Duke Calvar comes not here to day.

Donna V. Sirrah, thou liest! I wait him on this hour.
He promised me!

Carlos. They told me of him, lady,
He had ridden to the hunt, with hawk and hound,
And yet alone.

Donna V. Alone, and to the hunt?
What riddle weav'st thou?

Carlos. Chasing a new-found quarry,
Just started from a covert near Bilbao.

Donna V. [*Stamping her foot.*] I tell thee, knave, speak out!
I'll bear no more of this; *where went the Duke?*

Carlos. Madam, he rode—

Donna V. Well!

Carlos. To your uncle's castle.

Donna V. Alone?

Carlos. Alone, and secretly. But yet, I heard,
He would return attended. It was said
By the old porter, whom I roundly bribed,
That all within the castle was prepared
For feast and wassail.

Donna V. Knowest for what?

Carlos. The King
Comes on the morrow to grace the festival—

Donna V. The festival!

Carlos. And seal, with royal will,
Their nuptials.

Donna V. *Whose?*

Carlos. The Duke's.

Donna V. *Calvar's?*

The Duke's! [*She falls in a swoon, and the scene closes.*

SCENE III. *Evening—The gate of the same Castle—Enter* SILVIO, *the porter, and* PEDRO, *a servant.*

Pedro. Come, Silvio, comrade, a quarto for thy thoughts.

Silvio. Make it a doubloon, and I may talk with thee.

Pedro. Tut, man! thy whole brains, made into barbecue, and served up with tongue, were not worth the half of that. But, I would have thee say, what dost thou think of our mistress?

Silvio. Think of her? Why, simply, that she is my mistress, and that I am her honest porter, Silvio.

Pedro. Honest, forsooth!

Silvio. Ay; as honest as thou art a scurvy knave.

Pedro. If I do not break thy skull for that word, with thine own keys—

Silvio. Hold! she comes.

Pedro. The devil! I don't see her. The gate is fast.

Silvio. Ay, but the devil is loose.

Pedro. Ha, ha! my mistress is the devil, then! I have thy thoughts, loose-tongue, without the quarto. Good! But, dost thou really think—

Silvio. Think! blockhead—have done with thy thinking, and thy talking, too. Dost not know it is the hour when the White Witch goes her rounds?

Pedro. Ave Maria Sanctissima! Thou puttest me all in a tremble! Didst thou ever see her?

Silvio. Never but once before last night. Heaven shield me from all that follows! Her footsteps among the leaves, I have heard a-many a time.

Pedro. And at this hour?

Silvio. Always at this hour.

Pedro. May-be thou mayst disbelieve me, but I tell thee I am bitterly afeard.

Silvio. I have no doubt of it. To meet her, and cross her path as she walks, they say, is death.

Pedro. Ugh, ugh, ugh! *Sancta Maria Ora—*

Silvio. Get thee in, get thee in. I shall be murdered with rheumatism in these old bones if the night air blows on me. Get in. [*Exeunt.*

[*The Witch,* ISMENA, *passes over the stage rapidly, leading* DONNA VIOLA *by the hand—scene then changes.*

SCENE IV. *The Pyrenees by moonlight—A fountain gushing from a crevice among the rocks—Enter* ISMENA, *the Witch, and* DONNA VIOLA.

Donna V. Whither so fast?

Ismena. Now we may rest. Thy wish
Is granted. In this stream resides the power
Thy spirit craved.

Donna V. Then let me drink of it.

Ismena. Hast thou no fears?

Donna V. Passion and fear are strangers!
They are like sun and night; when passion burns,
Fear sinks at once to the antipodes.
O! I could quaff fire, bathe in blood, or sleep
On couch no softer than these pointed rocks—
So might I win the power to wreak my will
On those I love, and hate!

Ismena. 'Tis easier won.
'Tis but to stoop and touch thy dainty lips
To this pure mountain crystal, which my spells
Have somewhat wrought upon, and all is thine.

[DONNA VIOLA *stoops and drinks.*

Go—thou art now resistless. Every eye
Thy glance shall meet will answer thine with love.
Mark well my words: "*Thy hand shall have the power*

To draw e'en lions from their den; and he
Whose lips meet thine, shall seek no other love!"
If what thou soughtst as blessing, prove a *curse,*
Say not that *I* have cursed thee.

Donna V. I am armed;
And be the weapon blessed or cursed, to me
It matters little. On the race of man
I crave revenge; most dearly upon him
Who hath so wronged me. *Love* shall yield me power
To lay men at my feet, my abject slaves!
If it recoil on me—

Ismena. Come, let us hence.

Donna V. To-morrow will I to Duke Calvar's castle;
Then, if my spells prove powerless on him,
Witch, thy foul treachery shall not fail reward!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A festival, with masquers, &c., in the Castle of the Duke of Bilbao—Enter* DONNA VIOLA, *masqued, pursued by* KING PHILIP.

King Philip. Nay, then, sweet nymph, be not so fleet of foot!
I am not wont to weary so in chase.
Donna V. Nor I to be so worn with being chased.
King Philip. Why, then, pray rest thee on this arm awhile.
I am not yet so old nor grim of mien,
In step nor lip so palsied nor so cold,
That dainty beauties need take fright at me.
Donna V. What wouldst thou?
King Philip. Dost thou know me?
Donna V. Sire, I do;
But it were rank disloyalty in woman
To yield to majesty, in kingly state,
More than in maiden honor would be given
Unto his humblest vassal.
King Philip. Sayst thou so?
Why, then, I'll be most humble, and put up
A vassal-like request.

Donna V. What is it, sire?

King Philip. That I might kiss your majesty's fair hand.

Donna V. Ay, and my lips too.

King Philip. Wilt thou be so free?

Donna V. Upon condition only.

King Philip. Name the price.

Donna V. That, from this moment, all my motions here
Shall be unfettered by your royal hand,
Or word, or look.

King Philip. 'Tis granted. [*Kisses her.*] O, ye heavens!
What magic's in those lips? What art of fire—
What necromancy spelled them with such sweetness?
Yet, *one* word, lady—
One little word—when shall we meet again?

Donna V. To-morrow noon—no, no; you will forget me.

King Philip. Not till the moon remembers not to shine,
Or night to set!

Donna V. To-morrow, then, a page
Will bring a token from my hand. Farewell;
Remember our condition. Heed you not
Whatever stirs.

[*Enter* DUKE CALVAR *with* DONNA OLIVIA, *his bride.*]
Sir Duke, a word with you!

Duke C. No words, fair masque, are sweet to bridegroom's ears
That make not music for his mistress, too.

Donna V. Thine ears alone must hear what I would say.

Duke C. My ears are deaf to all but what she hears.

Donna V. [*Taking him by the hand.*] *You must,* my lord, come hence!

Duke C. [*Going.*] A most brave masque, ha! ha!

Donna Olivia. Calvar!

Duke C. Anon, my lady! 'tis some folly; I will be with thee soon; sweet, pardon me.

[*Exeunt* DONNA V. *and* DUKE CALVAR.

SCENE II. *A terrace or balcony belonging to the same Castle* —*Enter* DUKE CALVAR *and* DONNA VIOLA.

Duke C. By all the saints, and Mary's self to boot,
This is a famous prank! There dwells more strength
In three small fingers of that lily hand
Than in all Hercules'! Now, what art thou?
Come, I must know. [*Raises her masque.*] *What, Viola, thou here!*
Who bade *thee* to this feast?

Donna V. My slighted love!
Know thou, false Duke, true love is Argus-eyed,
And winged like Mercury! Embattled walls,
Gates, and portcullis, are but things of sport,
That give its search more zest! I would have found thee,
Though twice ten thousand men stood armed around,
And thou in the centre; or, though the hollow earth

Had hid thee in her bosom, farther down
Than ever miner sank his fearful shaft!
Thou hast been false to me.

Duke C. O, pardon, Viola!

Donna V. Talk not of pardon! Were thy home a dungeon,
Lonely, and cold, and damp, where one small ray
Of heaven's light smiled on thee through a crevice,
And one poor cup of water every day,
And crust of bread, came to thee by its aid,
O, tell me! wouldst thou pardon him whose hand
Should close that gap, that shone, like Heaven's mercy,
Between thee and thy doom, and leave thee there
To die in darkness? Yet, in woman's heart
Are loneliness and darkness such as ne'er
In dankest cavern gloomed, when the sweet light
Of love, her sunshine, is shut out forever!

Duke C. Then I am guilty—guilty.

Donna V. Basely so;
But come, thou mayst in part atone.

Duke C. O, how?
Be it by forfeiture of lands, or vassals,—
Or precious gems; or favor with the king;
Or aught more dear—

Donna V. What need have I of these?
I ask a simple boon; wilt promise it?

Duke C. Ay, on my knees.

Donna V. *One visit to my castle—*
Alone—as was your wont in happy days.
Duke C. O paragon of mercy! If all souls
That sin, were damned with such sweet punishment,
High heaven were almost saintless!
Donna V. Well, my lord,
You marvel at my kindness; and, perchance,
May now repent already of your grant.
I will not urge it.
Duke C. Then will I, by Heaven!
Now thou hast proffered it—by all the joys
So treasured once—ah! villain memory!
That didst not keep such record of that bliss,
As would have blotted out all other hopes!
Why did I lose thee? O, fool that I was!
Why did I bury me in another's arms?
Donna V. Not yet art thou so buried, noble Duke,
But that *thy spirit may walk.*
Duke C. Hold, tempter, hold!
My plighted oath!
Donna V. Was it not sworn to *me?*
Once, did you swear a thousand loving oaths;
One for each day, a new one for each hour;
Then, every kiss was crownéd with an oath.
Then tell me not of any newer vows:
False to yon bride, thou wert a perjurer;
But, false to me, a thousandfold more perjur'd!

Duke C. My passion seconds what my reason scorns.
Honor seems dead; all faith but faithless seems;
Now every thought is swallowed up in one,
Sweet, Viola; to have but thee alone!
Thou art not mortal, but some goddess grown,
To lure me thus, like lion from his lair,
My bridal revelry still ringing loud!
But, lady, by whatever spell attained,
The palm is thine: Olivia is my bride,
My wife, my duchess—but *thou art my queen!*

Donna V. Then, listen to my sovereign commands.

Duke C. Humbly I wait to hear and to obey.

Donna V. Mark, then; in pity to yon new-made wife,
I will not ask what, once all mine, thou stolest;
I ask but that, one day in every seven,
We celebrate the memory of old loves
Housed in my castle; thus, in part, may you
Heal my deep wound of many broken oaths.

Duke C. Most generous queen! Thy subject shall obey.

Donna V. Then, now, farewell; back to your blushing bride;
Yet, in the height and summit of your bliss,
So much at least of punishment is due—
Remember Viola.

Duke C. Shall the day be to-morrow?

Donna V. Nay; but the next.

Duke C. The next, then, may it be.
But, goest not to the feast again?
Donna V. Not I;
Good-night.
Duke C. Good-night, my queen!
Donna V. Thou wilt remember?
Duke C. Ay, until doomsday. [*Exit.*
Donna V. O, that treacherous word!
How many times that day had come to pass,
Did breaking of men's vows compel it hither.
But yet, my charms work well: *I thank thee, Witch!*
[*Exit.*

SCENE III. *A woodland at sunrise—Enter* DON ALONZO *in the dress of a student.*

Don Alonzo. What lovely vision passed before my sight?
In many lands I have travelled, and have seen
All bright ideals of immortal art;
And, in weird fancy's studio, I have found,
Or fashioned, forms of still surpassing grace;
But ne'er in travel, art, or fancy's forms,
Have these eyes looked upon so fair a thing!
She sat upon her horse as though the air
Were proud to bear her up, nor needed else;
And from her eye such lustre darted forth

As might have roused the lark before the dawn!
O, I will follow her! and if this earth
Do give her habitation, once again
Mine eyes may feast upon such wondrous charms!

[*Exit.*

Enter PIETRO, *a shepherd.*

Pietro. What do these gentlefolks abroad so early? Why, here have I just rubbed my sleepy eyes, and come to run a race with the skylark, when this madcap of a lady comes galloping across the fields, with a poor devil of a page trying the mettle of his steed and his spurs to keep pace with her. But, by the keys of the Church, that fine lass has a wondrous pair of eyes! What a lovely milkmaid she would make! What a sight, when all the lads and lasses were at the vintage, to see her among them all, with such a smile on her lips, and such a song in her mouth, as would turn all our merry fellows mad! Pietro, my boy, an thou ever seest her again—La, la! what a pair of eyes! Eyes, eyes! why, they would make it day at the frozen pole of the earth, where they say the sun is out of sight for six months!

[*Exit, singing.*

SCENE IV. *A room in Algolar Castle—Enter* DONNA VIOLA (*in riding habit*) *and* HELENA.

Donna V. O, 'twas a fright, Helena!
Helena. How, dear lady?

Donna V. I tremble yet—I who have dared so much!
Hold me—I faint! Such, such we women are!
Thus, in the fire and tempest of our passion,
We can meet fiends; but, when our rage is cooled,
A mouse may fright us!

Helena. What hath happened you?

Donna V. A dozen robbers, scarce a mile from hence,
Set on us suddenly from out a wood.
They bound yon trusty page, who fought, forsooth,
As though ten years of war had schooled his arms;
And then to me their bearded chieftain came,
In act to draw me from my saddle down.

Helena. O, terrors!

Donna V. Then, I thought me of a spell
Learned from Ismena, the old mountain hag.
I placed my hand upon his ruffian grasp,
And cried, "a word, bold sir!" "No words," he said;
"Kisses would more become those pretty lips!"
"Yet, words first, kisses after," I replied;
Mastering the fears that choked me. He stood back,
And, wondering, gazed on me as might a wolf
To hear a lamb cry "truce" to his bloody jaws.
Thus, woman's gentleness is oft more strong
Than valor, trebly armed. His dark brow smoothed,
Lip softened, and his eye grew mild with love;
Anon, he sank upon his very knees;
Begged and entreated me to smile on him;

Asked pardon for the rudeness of his seizure;
Bid Carlos be unbound; in short, did all
To show himself the conquered, though my victor.

Helena. And did he leave you so?

Donna V. He did, Helena;
Only he bade me (which his noble front,
Most knightly bearing, and frank courtesy
Made easy ransom) promise in return,
I would forget his ruffian-like pursuit;
And, as he swore he was of gentlest blood,
Guest him within my castle.

Helena. Passing strange!

Donna V. O, Helena—things stranger yet may be!
There is a restless fever in my thoughts,
That calls for *more*—and will not be appeased,
Though all the noblest of this goodly land
Fall, as love's vassals, at my thronéd feet!
Go, deck my room of state: this afternoon
Perchance his majesty may happen here.

Helena. The King?

Donna V. The King! why not?—Go, child, prepare.

[*Exit* HELENA.

'Tis said, the lion that hath tasted blood,
Slumbrous and tame before, grows hot with rage—
Thirsting for prey; even so, methinks, am I,
Now this new lust of power hath so been fed.
Woman's first passion ever must be love;

But, be this thwarted—jealousy, or revenge,
Or love of power, each may hold its rule,—
Or all at once;—mine, mine is love of conquest!
But, for this paltry Duke—
He is *not true;* what care I for *his* love?
I shall not worship changelings. The true heart,
Where Love sits once enthroned, no charms divine,
Not Cleopatra—Circe's wand—nor Siren—
Not all the bright perfections of an angel—
Can bend to swerve from its allegiance!
O, thus would I have loved, had he been true!
For I did doat on him till love in me
Became idolatry. Then, all things changed;
The very air and sunshine glowed like heaven;
And he, who, erst had been a plain blunt man,
Became Hyperion to my love-lit eyes.
So wondrous is the alchemy of love!
But now—all's gone. He is my prey. Come, power!
I have exchanged my nature with the tigress;
And, through the tangled jungle of men's hearts
I move, with stealthy tread, yet sure of spring,
And strong to wound—e'en to the bloody death!

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A room of state in the Castle of Algolar—Enter, on one side,* KING PHILIP; *on the other,* DONNA VIOLA.

King Philip. Thou fair enchantress, who hast won me so
To doff my royalty, as one of old
More mighty did his strength, behold me here,—
All unattended, as thou bad'st me come;
Content, thus at thy feet, thy royal slave!

[*Kneels to her.*

Donna V. Rise, sire; such homage should be yours from me.

King Philip. No; in love's kingdom, all high rule reversed,
One only sceptre sways the universe—
'Tis woman's beauty, and that nameless charm
Which thou, fair queen of hearts, so queenly wear'st!

Donna V. I do beseech your majesty to rise.

King Philip. Command me, and I must obey perforce.

Donna V. Your humblest servant doth command you, then.— [*The* KING *rises.*
Will you be seated? Or, I well remember,
Your highness hath a more Arcadian fancy—

I have a pleasant garden near the castle,
Shaded, yet sweet with wafted breath of flowers;
And cool withal, where waters fall and flow;
Wilt walk with me?

King Philip. Sweet, there or anywhere.
I am bound up in love; thy Orphean voice
Would tame me, were I wilder than the leopard.
Spain! thou shalt be forgot; my peace, my war,
Viola, this bright day, shall make or mar.

Donna V. Bring music, Carlos! sweet, soul-trancing music;

[CARLOS *enters.*]

Let the strain fall as soft as dew on flowers,
And sweeter than the perfumed cups it fills!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The gateway of the same Castle—Enter* HELENA, *in Spanish out-door costume, knocking*—SILVIO *opens the gate.*

Silvio. So, Helena!

Helena. Well, master Silvio, is thy solemn mouth open to-day, as well as thy pond'rous gate? In faith, I know not which goes the rustier.

Silvio. Peace! Thy mistress hath had brave company to-day.

Helena. A gentleman only—true, a right fair gentleman he seemed.

Silvio. Ha, girl! dost think I could serve ten years in his royal father's guard, and not know that face? There's much good, or more ill, brewing in a house when our Sire Philip enters it for a lady's smiles.

Helena. For shame on thee, for an old scandal-monger! The queen's crown has sat on less fair heads than our Lady Viola's; and, maybe, less noble, too.

Silvio. Didst thou speak of wisdom and craft, I would be with thee; for I believe the devil helps her on occasion.

Helena. Not without her helping him in return, on occasion, thou wouldst say; but, I tell thee, thy wise head there is *all wrong.* Our mistress would neither wed King Philip for his throne, nor be his, for the crown jewels, without the throne.

Silvio. Well, well, berries will be red when they ripen; and so will be lips and cheeks when the young blood is in them. Let go; I shall not meddle with kings, nor donnas neither, so long as there's beef in the pot, and my gate needs no mending. Let go! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A chamber—Enter* DONNA VIOLA *and* HELENA *in night dress—Song, with the guitar heard without.*

Song.

Sleepest, or wakest, lady fair?
Now, in his lair,

Each wild thing slumbers.
Of all earth's numbers,
Save love and I,
There wakes no eye;
Sleepest, or wakest, lady?

If thou art dreaming,
Through closed lids beaming,
Be sights more fair than Jacob's angels given;
But, if thou wake,
Sweet mercy take
On love that finds those starry eyes its heaven!
Sleepest, or wakest, lady?

Donna V. What voice doth flatter us with such sweet address?
Such music is more welcome, far, than sleep!
O, it is bliss, at midnight, when the moon,
Soft peeping through the lattice, gilds our dreams,
To have them melted into wakefulness—
As much more sweet than day's as heaven than earth—
By the soft touch of song! It is not waking;
But seems like dying into some other world,
All made of happiest dreams. Why doth he cease?
Go, Helena, wake Silvio; command
This gentle warbler be enforcéd in.
Bid him be entertained. Say that, to-morrow,
Some strict affairs must urge me to be private;

But that another day shall not pass noon
Without our conference. Go, haste, Helena.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *A field or woodland—Enter* CARLOS.

Carlos. Now, if this be not the wildest chase after a tame goose that ever Christian man was sent upon! To find a scurvy lout of a peasant boy, that knows no more how to speak to a fine lady than I would know how to shear ewes! Methinks, if my mistress be ever so fond of mutton, she might eat it without acquaintance with all the grass it was pastured on. But, mayhap, she hath an ambition to be like the famous monarch of old time—and eat grass herself; in that case, I don't wish to have the watching of her. One would have to look well to the fences! Here he comes, as I guess. Now we will have our errand done, at last.

[*Enter* PIETRO, *with a shepherd's crook.*]

Say, my friend, is not thy name Pietro?

Pietro. True, I be one of that name; but there be more about.

Carlos. Well, I reckon thou wilt do as well as another for me, so that thou keep sheep.

Pietro. Nay, but I don't do that; sheep keep me.

Carlos. How wilt thou prove that?

Pietro. Isn't a one kept by what he eats and wears? And don't I shear the sheep, and sell them; and kill them,

and eat them; and wear their wool, too? I would like to see the sheep that would eat me, and wear my wool.

Carlos. O, thou art a very keen shepherd! Now, I guess that, out of thy plentiful wit, thou canst answer me one question.

Pietro. If I don't, hold me as dull as that dainty sword there of thine, that never was meant to cut.

Carlos. Thou liest, clodhopper! Misshapen lump, thou—mutton-mouth, thou—

Pietro. Wilt call me a mutton-mouth?

[*Flourishing his stick.*

Carlos. Hold, good shepherd! brave, magnanimous shepherd, hold! Put up that weapon, I pray!

Pietro. Art thou not afraid of me?

Carlos. For the sake of argument, we will say, I am. Only grant me that my sword hath a right good edge.

Pietro. Granted, for the sake of argument. Then, what dost thou want with me?

Carlos. Civilly, to know whereabouts those sheep do keep you, and feed you, and lead you to water, and pasture you.

Pietro. O, now thou art speaking reason again. Come along, and I'll show thee where we graze. This way; come along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *A garden—Enter* DONNA VIOLA *and* DUKE CALVAR.

Donna V. Duke, I have said; no more! Calvar, no more!

Duke C. Sweet, be it *Calvar* still; call me not *Duke.*

Donna V. That shall be as your merit stands with me.

Duke C. Dost thou not love me?

Donna V. Else, why call thee hither?

Duke C. Then, why so foreign to love's tender guise?
The passion which, in its first purple dawn,
Feeds on soft looks—is feasted with a kiss—
Grows wild with ardor in its height of noon;
Thus mine— [*Approaches her.*

Donna V. Away! Duke, I command thee; cease!

Duke C. Must I obey?

Donna V. Thou shalt!

Duke C. [*Turning slowly away.*] Most cruel tyrant!

Donna V. Hold, Calvar! For this due obedience,
I will forgive thy froward tongue. Remember,
(Thou canst not doubt my love), when rolls a week,
The self same day makes thee again my guest.

Duke C. Unwillingly I leave—but am most glad
To salve my penance with that better hope.
For this time vanquished; O, thou bitter-sweet,
That mak'st and marr'st my passion in a breath!
I'll rule thee yet! [*Aside.*

[*Exeunt, on opposite sides.*]

SCENE VI. *A room in Algolar Castle—Enter* DONNA VIOLA, *and* DON ALONZO *in student's dress.*

Donna V. Sir Student, I most humbly crave your pardon,
For giving you so slow and dull a welcome.
Your moonlit strain, which sweetly broke our sleep,
Might have flung wide the gates of palaces!

Don Alonzo. Ah, lady! pardon my presumptuous song!
The tongue bears not the guilt, which from the heart
Gushed madly; such sweet madness you inspire!

Donna V. Art thou not strange to me?

Don Alonzo. These eyes but once
Opened upon thy beauty; yet such space
That picture holds in my mind's gallery,
And I so oft have conned it, that, 'twould seem
I must have seen thee many million times!

Donna V. To flatter, is the poet's privilege.

Don Alonzo. No, lady; he, whose soul is Nature's child,
Nurtured by her alone, as those of old
By manna from God's hand—most worships truth!
O, call not poets false, in heart or song;
Where falsehood dwells, there beauty dies away;
Sweet tune from broken harp might come, as well
As poesy—from a heart that is not true!

Donna V. I wronged thy calling then; wilt thou forgive?

Don Alonzo. Yes, lady. I have heard, in other lands,
Strange tales of faery-work and witchery;

Of mighty wands, and mystic muttered spells;
Doubtful I heard them; but I doubt no more,
That unseen spirits hover o'er our world—
Through its dark caverns climbing from their depths,
Or winging downward thro' the air: the power
Thy beauty wields, hath something of their nature.
Else, a lone student, thoughtful, shy, and timid,
Had not thus dared to scale thy lofty state—
As though a dove should mount to an eagle's nest!
Magic or madness wrought it, noble lady.

Donna V. Then call it madness; for I love so well
To hear thee rave, 'twere bliss to be thy keeper;
So wander ever, gentle lunatic!
And, if aught else of vagary be thine—
Pray tell me; so, perchance, may come thy cure.

Don Alonzo. These soft words, lady, but increase my ill.
O! could I dare to take you at your word,
And tell you, that my madness grows so bold,
It leaps, in wishes, even to those lips!
What punishment do such rash thoughts deserve?

Donna V. Naught, but free pardon, if I be the judge.
Dost think, the church would frown on gentlest love,
Given as *medicine* for *lunacy?*

Don Alonzo. No, lady; 'twere a blameless charity.

Donna V. I would 'twere thine.

Don Alonzo. O, rare munificence!
Now, am I tenfold madder than before.
Methinks I am another man than I;

A knight's full armor weighs upon my limbs;
Give me my sword and helm! Bring forth my horse!
On—for my lady!—No, no—pardon me.
I did forget myself. Sometimes 'tis so.
Most noble lady, I am strange in speech;
But, trust me, were I in more courtly guise,
(Such virtue travel worketh in the rude)—
I might not lack the mien of chivalry.
Something I've seen of war—a looker on;
And sometimes—when the soul is wrought upon,
Things past come thus between us and our sight.
Forgive me;—but, those eyes, those lips, O Heaven!
I do beseech you, bear with my caprice.
It is my way, being too hot of brain,
When aught hath stirred these rebel spirits up,
Dull walls cannot contain me; shall we forth?

Donna V. Gladly, fair sir; your madness is infectious.

Don Alonzo. I pray you, do forgive me. I am bold;
But when this sudden tempest vents itself,
You'll find me passing humble.

Donna V. Let us forth. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Another room in the same Castle—Enter* DONNA VIOLA.

Donna V. Now, were I not so vowed to my revenge
So arm'd and steel'd against the approach of love,

That Cupid's self, with all his darts, would fail
To pierce my encas'd heart—'twere conquered here!
This student hath a princely nobleness,
As though he were the child of pomp and power.
Low-born are seldom so; yet, well I know,
Some natures are there, heedless of degree;
Whose in-born majesty, of God's own crowning,
Shames all the world's poor, puppet dignities!
Kings, and their courts, in life's gay Carnival,
Strut oft, like apes, in conquerors' disguise;
But, when unhooded greatness walks among them,
Their pomp and tinsel show like lamps by daylight!
Alonzo I *could love.* Yet, I am free!
Victims must still be humbled to my power;
Still must I make night smile, to con again
The tale of each day's conquest. Helena!

[*Enter* HELENA.]

Bring me some famous bravery of dress.
This robber-gentle is my guest to-day.
Let's play the bandit. Did'st thou never hear
Of Donna Cassima, the Moorish lady,
Who, for her humor, roved the mountains once,
Armed *cap-à-pie,* the terror of the passes?
A slender sword might suit this figure well;
Though for the helm—but haste, methinks he comes!

[*Exeunt—After a little time*

Re-enter HELENA *with* CARLOS.]

Helena. Is he not noble, Carlos? O, the Hector!
With what a fearful flourish strode he in!
I wonder, when he seized you on your road,
You did not die from fright at him. And yet
So handsome, too! Good lack, this lady of ours
Weareth some wondrous spell, to tame such hearts.
Would I could learn it too! 'Twould be my fortune.

Carlos. I do believe you, there's some magic in it.

Helena. Yet would I fear to be alone with him,
As she sits now.

Carlos. In honesty—so would I;
Though I did cross my maiden sword with his.
I wonder, now, I dared; he is one of those
Who carry thunder on their dark knit brows;
His close teeth glisten, like the flash of knives,
When, from beneath his bearded lip, he smiles;
His deep voice mocks the tiger's angry roar;
All things about him speak ferocity.

Helena. Yet now, he's whispering a tale of love;
Hark, through the half-closed door we scarce can hear it.
Such might soft passions have to rule the fierce!

Carlos. Aye, but the end, Helena, comes not yet.

Helena. Hast any fears?

Carlos. I have; but it were vain
To call up ghosts we cannot lay again. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII. *The same—Enter* DONNA VIOLA *and* ROMULO, *the Bandit.*

Donna V. For this time, Romulo, farewell. A week
Passed over—be thou here my guest again.

Romulo. Hard clemency! But, I have pledged my honor,
And, this time, must abide it. Yet know, lady,
I am a man much more of deeds than words;
And, what this passion may inflame me to,
Failing love's substance, as you seem to proffer
Its shadow for my bait, I dare not limit.
I love thee; and, where Romulo hath loved,
Death or *possession* follows! [*Exit.*

Donna V. Ha! 'tis well.
I am *almost* frighted. Yet, I do not fear him!
'Twill be a duller day than any yet,
When, with my woman's wit, I may not match
The full strength of one man! Well, I am weary.
Off with these trappings. 'Twas a feverish scene!
To-morrow will I cool my o'er-stirred heart
With a pure pastoral. Carlos!

Enter CARLOS.

Carlos. Here, my lady.

Donna V. Was I not told that thou had'st found the fields
Where Pietro, the peasant, feeds his flocks?

Carlos. 'Twas so, my lady.

Donna V. Now, then, for my rest.
To dream of shepherd's pipes. No more banditti!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX. *A chamber*—DONNA VIOLA *is seen reclining on a couch.*

Donna V. 'Twas but a vision! Why is my sleep so broken?
Unhallowed thoughts are trooping thro' my brain,
Marshalled by her I dread, the false Ismena!
Away! I'll yield no more; come, softly, sleep!

Enter the Witch, ISMENA.

What would'st *thou?*

Ismena. Thee!

Donna V. I am not thine, nor will be!
Take back thy spells, and leave me!

Ismena. I cannot;
The charm Hell wove, Hell never can unwind!

Donna V. Yet leave me; for my heart hath learned to hate thee!
I charge thee, hence; tempt my weak soul no farther!

[ISMENA *gesticulates violently, as if struggling with an invisible Power; and at length, with a wild shriek, disappears.*]

No more I'll sleep alone, nor in this place;

Her vanish'd shape hath shed a gloom around,
That chills my very soul! O, it is fearful
To tamper with such spirits in their might,
For our small, selfish ends! In this still hour,
How strangely changed look all life's tangled schemes;
And that which, in the day, would cause but mirth,
Stalking in night and silence, most appals me!
I'll think no more; each shadow grows a ghost;
Hence, hence! [*Exit.*

SCENE X. *Another room in Algolar Castle—Enter* CARLOS *and* HELENA.

Helena. Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! O, Carlos, if thou could'st but have seen that sport! To see our lady, there, all in plain rustic trim, playing the diffident with that love-smitten clown! La! la!

Carlos. Did he not seem to know her?

Helena. Know! why, the poor fool knew nothing. Here was he, as it were, sometimes sitting down and sometimes standing, and then walking around and around her—anon falling on both knees before her, taking up her two lily hands as though he would swallow them both whole, the oaf!

Carlos. And how did she play her part the while?

Helena. Oh! most gently and perfectly. None of your stage-players could come up with her. There sat she, on a

little rock by the great olive tree, with her hands in her lap, so—and a face more innocent than the image of the Virgin in yon chapel. A good play, sure, it was.

Carlos. Did they say nothing?

Helena. So much of nothing that I could not remember the hundredth part of it; and yet it was nothing, after all. I only know that, if I had not smothered my laughter with coughing, it must have gone very ill with me. "Sweet maiden," said he, "is thy name Carlotta?" "No, sweet youth," answered the lady, "it is Viola." "Sweet Viola, it should have been Carlotta; that were a prettier name. My sister, and my mother, and my grandame, wear that name." "Well, fair Pietro, I will wear any name thou like, so thou wilt love me in it." And with that the poor sheep, with less wit than any ram in his flock, grew so over-deep in his new madness of love, that he lay there gazing in a sort of dream; till *the other sheep* wandered off a good half mile or so—and none but the lady herself could get him to run and fetch them back again.

Carlos. Dost thou know what *new* game is toward?

Helena. No, not I.

Carlos. Our lady bade me, when this storm came up, keep an eye over the road, to see what traveller came by.

Helena. Did'st thou see any one?

Carlos. Aye, just before I came in hither. I have orders to stop him, and bid him take shelter from the rain in this castle.

Helena. O! more pastime! What was it like, good Carlos?

Carlos. I think, a Moor; but yet, a very proper man withal; lion-like in port; swarthy, and stately, and yet graceful, too.

Helena. A Moor! Faith, I love Moors! If the mistress will not have him, he shall not pass me without a smile, I warrant. It is my turn to have sport now, when she begins to tire of them.

Carlos. Oh, Helena! to talks of Moors and cast-offs, when here am I, so fond, so fervently amorous—

Helena. Thou, indeed! Think you the mistress shall have a twenty or more, each as handsome as the king, and I am to be content with a buckram page that hath not a beard an inch long? Away, Carlos!

Carlos. Well, I must away now, indeed; for I am bid to be ambassador in the rain to Señor don Moor, below there; and that is no dry sport, forsooth. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE XI. *The gate of the same Castle—A stormy night—Enter* SILVIO, CARLOS, *and* ABDALLAH, *a Moorish knight.*

Carlos. My mistress bids me to entreat you, sir,
Brave not the terrors of both storm and night,
But enter hither.

Abdallah. A most kind request.
Would I were worthier of it! Tell her that I
Am of a race her fathers warred against;
I come, to seek my old ancestral graves;
And there find record, writ in tears and blood,
Of their most warlike deeds.

Carlos. Still are you welcome.
Those ancient feuds were buried, long ago;
And, were our dearest foes unhoused to-night,
No Christian door were closed.

Abdallah. True, nor Moor's neither.
I'll enter with thee.

[*Exeunt* CARLOS *and* ABDALLAH.]

Silvio. Here are brave doings, indeed. When the last of the Moors sleeps a night in the house where the King of Spain dined the other day, old things may become new again. One, two, three, four, five, six; why, upon this reckoning, of all the days in the week, she hath left but one for the Church! A good mass it should be, then, to do the business of the whole seven! But, I fear me, the White Witch stands in the way of that. Ah, well! let the spit turn and turn, and when the hare is roasted, it will sing. Let go, let all go, I say!

[*Goes in and shuts the gate.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A room in Algolar Castle—Enter* DONNA VIOLA *and* CALVAR, *Duke of Bilbao.*

Duke C. Once, Viola, you were less cold to me.

Donna V. You were not, then, yourself so over-bold.

Duke C. Should not love grow? Should it not speak, and look,
Aye, and act, too? Why did you win my love;
And, having lost it, charm it back again,
If 'tis but thus to hold me at your beck,
For sport and torment, like a cagéd bird?
I will not bear it!

Donna V. Nay, but you must, my lord.

Duke C. *Why* do you treat me so?

Donna V. For my revenge; no more!

Duke C. Then be it thwarted. I have let loose the reins
On passion's neck: onward!

[*Approaches her impetuously.*]

Donna V. [*Retreating.*] My lord, you near me at your peril.

Duke C. Ha, ha!
Thou little wren, dar'st thou the lion's paw?
I am roused; sweet devil, charming ruin, thou—
Fly not, 'tis vain!

Donna V. Then, if *no other* safety,

[*The Duke seizes her*—DONNA V. *suddenly draws a dagger from her bosom, and stabs him.*]

This must be mine! Thou double-hearted villain,
If I had loved thee still, or thou or I
Had thus atoned thy fault; now, it is well.

Duke C. O, serpent! thou hast stung me! Punished, punished! [*Dies.*

Donna V. This, then, is *death;*—a cold, strange, horrid sight!
And have *I* done it, with this trembling hand?
Now that 'tis done, methinks I am slain myself!
Help, Helena! Will no one hear me? Help,
Carlos! [*Throws herself upon a couch.*]
Still, still alone? I must go forth, and seek
Some friendly witness to this bloody deed.
O, how I shake! Thou shalt play false no more;
[*Looking on the Duke.*]
No more spend husband's *fondness* at thy home,
Fresh gathered from my lips! Once, I *did* love thee!
But now, remorse hath lost a pang in knowing
It was not all revenge: thine act compelled it!
[*Exit.*

[*Enter, shortly,* CARLOS, SERVANTS, *and* HELENA, *who cries out.*]

Carlos. No words, no words; let all be done in silence.
Take it up, and bear him hence. I lead the way.

[*Exeunt, bearing the body of the Duke.*]

SCENE II. *A forest—Enter* CARLOS *and* SERVANTS, *bearing the Duke's body.*

Carlos. Stop; lay him here; close to the open road.
Go, some one, bring his horse, and tie it near.
'Twill thus be thought he has been slain by robbers.
Servant. I doubt, 'twill long be thought so.
Carlos. Well, no matter.
'Tis said that murder, done in deepest night,
In the most stillest spot, without a sound,
Has yet, in course of watchful Providence,
Been traced to the doer. But, were *this* proclaimed,
The common heart of human kind would judge it
As *less* than murder. Looks it not so to you?
Servants. Yes, yes!
Carlos. Then thus our mouths are sealed. Return.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A room in Algolar Castle—Enter* DONNA VIOLA *and* HELENA.

Donna V. Is't not the Sabbath, Helena?
Helena. It is.
Donna V. Go, bid one bring a priest. This dagger-work
Hath left a heavy sickness on my heart.
Thou know'st I am not over full of faith;
But, if there be in heavenly conjuration

Aught that can give the wounded spirit ease,
I want it now. 'Tis true, priests are not angels.
I doubt, they are all quite human. Bring one hither.

Helena. Who shall it be, my lady? Father Simon,
White-haired, and bowed with years and penances?

Donna V. No! What have I to do with hoary age?
'Tis the young, only, know what youth can feel.
Bring me that Gabriel, whom I once have seen,
Shriving a dying villager. Thou know'st him?

Helena. Right well. 'Tis said, a truly pious priest.

Donna V. Would I could think as much of all his order!
Go, send for him; I wait him on the moment. [*Exit.*

Helena. Here is a new caprice, indeed! Within this castle,
Save for the rites of death, these twenty years,
Old Silvio tells, no holy man hath been.
I trust, it bodes but good; yet, by her eye,
He must be steel'd in Faith's most trusty armor,
And wear his visor down, whose soul meets hers,
And bears no scathe. God send us better thoughts!
[*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *The same—Enter* DONNA VIOLA *and* GABRIEL, *the Priest.*

Gabriel. God's blessing be upon thee, noble lady.

Donna V. I thank you, reverend sir. Behold in me,
One to the church a stranger; all unused

To forms, and canons, and all holy things.
In brief, I have no faith! But, sick of soul,
I longed to ask thee, can thine office help me?

Gabriel. He whom I serve hath help for all, my lady.

Donna V. Forgive, then, my unsaintly mien and speech,
And—forget thine ordained authority.
I know not, care not aught for solemn pomp;
As man with woman, hear and speak with me!

Gabriel. Lady, I am but man, as thou art woman.

Donna V. Then, can'st thou feel for me? Hast thou a heart?
Did ever passion set on fire thy blood?

Gabriel. I *have* a heart; but never yet loved woman,
Save with affection, and pure charity.

Donna V. A man, yet ne'er hast loved! Pray, look on me;
I fain would read some meaning in thine eyes;
Gaze not, so statue-like, upon the floor!
Can'st thou not love? Come; take this hand in thine;
Is it not gentle? [*Touching his clasped hands.*

Gabriel. Pardon me, noble lady.

Donna V. Are priests forbidden to be courteous?
Take it, and clasp it; there's no infection in it.

Gabriel. Pardon me, lady! O, too tempting madness!
[*Aside.*

Donna V. Thou art as cold as marble! Why? Those eyes

Are beautiful; that cheek hath a young glow,
Thriving mid penance, like a rose in winter:
I cannot think thee but a heartless statue!
Look upon me;
Flatterers have called me beauteous; think'st thou so?
There is a ruddy ripeness in my cheek,
'Tis true, and on my lip a redder glow;
And I am light of form, and quick in step,
Bird-like when joyous, tenderest when saddened;
In all things warm, impulsive, passionate.
Yet, did I proffer thee my virgin love,
Called thee *my own*, caressed and cherished thee,
Told thee, "Sweet Gabriel, I am *thine alone!*"
Yet would'st thou stand off from these opened arms,
Gabriel! And leave them empty! Would'st thou not?

Gabriel. Ay, would I, lady!

Donna V. Then thou *art* heartless, truly!

Gabriel. O, no, no, no!

Donna V. They tell me of a canon
Making all love forbidden fruit to you.
But can such be divine? No, never, never!
Nature is eloquent to plead its wrong;
Wherefore should man thus war against all nature?
I tell thee, hoary ages cannot plant
Respect upon the brows of such gross error.
But, man! I waste my words. *Thou hast no heart!*

Gabriel. Lady, I have!

Donna V. A heart, that holds no passion!

Gabriel. My passions are as warm and strong as thine!

Donna V. Then, wherefore now so calm?

Gabriel. [*Rising from his seat.*] O help me, Heaven! [*Aside.*

Calm, didst thou say? Yes, the great heavens are calm,
That give forth thunders with a moment's warning;
And the volcano's crater—it is calm,
'Ere it bursts forth, as tho' all hell were wakened!
I, too, am calm;—but, in this heart's volcano,
Passions are sleeping, deeper than tragedy;
Stronger than death; more fearful than the grave;
Which, were they not locked fast by love of Heaven,
Would make thee *tremble* with their lightest whisper!

Donna V. Fair sir, forgive me; reverend sir, I wronged you.

Gabriel. Daughter, thou wrong'st me not, nor need'st my pardon.

I came to offer thee my humble counsel;
If thou dost need none, duty calls me hence.

Donna V. I do, I do; my heart is dark and blind!

Gabriel. Knowest thou not the teachings of our faith?

Donna V. I know not what faith is; the very babe,
School'd to its cradle-prayers, knows more than I.

Gabriel. Knowest thou, then, *thine own heart?*

Donna V. I never conned it!

Gabriel. Then let me paint it to thee.—It is evil;

Full of wrong thoughts and evil impulses;
Each lightning impulse mad to spring in action!

Donna V. How dost thou know me so? I did not tell thee!

Gabriel. 'Tis but the story of each human soul!
Alas, I know it well;—'tis mine!

Donna V. Hast *thou, too,* erred?

Gabriel. Lady, as full as charnel-house of bones,
Or the salt sea of things that creep and swim,
So full my heart is of corruption!

Donna V. What can I hope, then? If the best are so,
What room in heaven for *me?*

Gabriel. 'Tis not by merit;
But, by God's mercy—best and worst are equal,
If all but will receive it.

Donna V. That is wondrous.
Thou hast put thoughts into my inmost heart,
That stir it, as leviathans the deep!

Gabriel. Rather, dear lady, may they prove as angels,
Moving it like Bethesda; whence may come
Healing, and life, and hope!

Donna V. Leave me awhile;
I fain would ponder o'er what thou hast said.

Gabriel. Take, then, this scroll with thee, and con it well.
The whole world were not worth it, read aright.

[*Exit.*

Donna V. Most strange, I thought not on these things before!

SCENE V. *The same*—MANET DONNA VIOLA *in a musing attitude.* [*Enter* CARLOS.]

Carlos. Madam, a knight, full-armed, and in hot haste,
Demands quick audience of your ladyship.

Donna V. Admit him, Carlos. What can his errand mean?

[*Exit* CARLOS.

I trust, no sudden mischief of the King's!

[*Enter* DON ALONZO, *in armor; his face concealed by his vizor.*]

Don Alonzo. This bold intrusion, lady, in a stranger,
Craves more excuse than time alloweth me.
I come, to warn you of impending peril.
Another hour will bring upon this castle
The fiercest siege of Romulo's banditti!

Donna V. Romulo?—'tis fearful! But, pray, who art thou,
Thus watchful of our safety, and his onslaught?

Don Alonzo. A nameless knight, in the king's service, madam;
One vowed to serve the right and quell the wrong,
Against all odds. A message from his highness
Bore me, with one attendant, to these hills;
Thus, by some accident, or Providence,
(As well I deem that Providence, whose guidance

Against my forethought, urged me to such ends,)
I overheard the project of these ruffians.
Now, is the time most urgent. My fleet horse,
With his Arabian speed, alone had brought me;
They press upon my heels. I beg you, lady,
Arm all your vassals; double bar the gates;
Man every height, and bid all call me leader!

Donna V. Sir Knight, it shall be done; and all true thanks
That warmest heart can offer, shall be yours!

Don Alonzo. No time for thanks, dear lady; this quick danger
Alarums all our faculties to action.
Not till the quiet of accomplish'd peace,
May gratulation, like the rainbow's arch,
O'erspan the cloudy heaven of our thoughts.
I go—to the rescue!

Donna V. All shall follow you!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *The gateway of the same Castle—Enter* ROMULO, *with banditti.*

Romulo. Halt. Stand in silence, while I win admission;
Then, on the instant, follow me, and enter!

[*Knocks at the gate.*]

What, ho! within there! Is the old man asleep?

By my old namesake, who first founded Rome,
I'll wake him presently, if he be dead!
Within there! ho!—a friend!

[*A trumpet sounds.*]

What trump is that?
Can it be Roderick's? Hath he had time to reach
The farthest tower?

A Bandit. I think he has not;
And 'tis not thus he blows.

Romulo. Then, 'tis some other!
Haste, let us force this crazy gate at once,
Or we have lost our time.

[*Enter* DON ALONZO, *with* CARLOS, *and armed vassals.*]

Don Alonzo. Hold, caitiffs, hold!
Here are live walls to batter; spare our gates!
On, to the rescue!

[*Vassals charge; exeunt omnes, fighting. Presently, re-enter* DON ALONZO *and* CARLOS, *with others, bringing* ROMULO, *disarmed and wounded.*]

Don Alonzo. Bind him, and prison him in your strongest hold,
To wait the pleasure of his majesty.
I go, to follow up the hot pursuit.
Carlos—remember me to thy noble mistress;
Tell her, the stranger knight hath errands onward;
But, if sweet leisure wait upon his arms,
He will not fail to pay her due respect. [*Exit.*

Carlos. Silvio! Silvio!

Silvio [*within.*] Aye, aye, there, hearties! Coming!

[*Opens the gate.*]

What! have ye bagged the game? Ugh! the he-wolf!
Pull out his teeth, Carlos, and cut his ham-strings;
And shut him up, where he'll breed no little wolves.

[*They go in, and close the gate.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A forest—Enter* DON ALONZO *and* ABDALLAH, *the Moor.*

Don Alonzo. Dost not remember me?

Abdallah. Aye, well; too well!
I never can forget that, five years since,
In Algiers, when a false slave's scimitar
Was at my throat, your strong hand flung him from me,
And saved my life!

Don Alonzo. Then wouldst thou now seek mine?

Abdallah. Hear me, sir knight!—I love you, honor you;
And, with the best blood of my very heart,
Would I defend you, in the battle's midst;
But, now, a whirlwind passion rules my soul,
That sweeps all else to the clouds! I love this lady,
Whom you have sworn your love shall yield to none;
Hence, the link'd battlements of the world's four corners,
Bristling with arms, keep not my sword from thine,
Whilst this hand lives to wield it! Draw, I say!

Don Alonzo. I will not draw upon thee; we are friends.

Abdallah. Out with thy sword! We are foes! Both shall not live;
If I slay thee, 'tis well;—if thou slay me,

'Twere better still!—Then, this poor play is over;
This masque of life, with which my soul is weary;
Where some are striving to seem what they are not,
And some to be what they can never reach,
And some are suffering for what they are;
Of *all* I am weary: let the curtain fall!
Or—let it rise on fortune, if Fate wills it!
Man, thou *shalt* fight me;—out with that laggard sword!
Now let the word be, *death* or *Viola!*

[*They fight*—ABDALLAH *is disarmed and thrown to the ground.*]

Don Alonzo. Live, Moor! And to thy distant home returned,
Remember, twice a Christian saved thy life!

Abdallah. Thus to live now, were slavery.—Die, thou dog!

[*Draws a dagger, and springs at* DON ALONZO.]

Don Alonzo. Ungrateful! Not quelled yet?

[*They struggle; at length* DON ALONZO *obtains the dagger, and wounds* ABDALLAH *mortally.*]

Such is barbarian blood!
Wert thou a Christian, I would not have killed thee;
'Twas thine own savageness thus brought it on.
Yet, O! what grief, for noble blood thus shed!
How all good angels in yon heaven must weep,
To see fierce passions thus make foul the earth!
Shame on thee, sword!—Would I had never loved,
Rather than love should spur me to such deeds! [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A priest's cell—Enter* FATHER GABRIEL, *and* DON ALONZO.

Don Alonzo. I come to seek thine holy aid, good father.

Gabriel. Call me not good; I am as weak as thou.
All are but beggars for the alms of Christ;
And oft the weakest and most needy bear
The message of his bounty; such am I.
What is thy need?

Don Alonzo. Forgiveness for great errors
Of hand and heart.

Gabriel. His voice who can forgive,
My words may feebly echo. Tell me of them.

Don Alonzo. Challenged to single combat, by a Moor,
A brave, true man, but mad with jealousy—
Upon the quarrel of a lady's love,
I slew him, though my friend.

Gabriel. Was the strife equal?

Don Alonzo. Most fair. I gave him once his life, which he
Refused, and strove to smite me with his dagger.

Gabriel. I cannot blame thee for the deed; although
Our great Example, who went to his slaughter
Lamb-like, would not have done it, and although,
E'en in the hour when insult maddened you,
His word would yet have been, "Put up thy sword;"

'Twill still be pardon'd thee. The perfect day
Has not yet noon'd on earth.—What else, my son?

Don Alonzo. Alas! what is not done, but doing still;
This fierceness of my passion for those charms
Which set our swords to warring.

Gabriel. Love may be guiltless!

Don Alonzo. But, in a heart where Love and Death once met,
And reared sad altars over buried hopes—
One who *hath* loved, and lost, earth's last perfection,
(A being, Pleiad-like, dropped out of heaven,
Too soon called back to angels' company)—
O, in a heart *thus* blessed, and thus bereft,
Seems not all passion an unholy guest?

Gabriel. My son, the heart hath many mansions in it;
Which, when the soul is dedicate to God,
All glorious attributes of manhood fill.
Thus, in its innermost, unwindow'd chamber,
Lit from the skies alone, sweet Memory dwells;
But, in the outer palaces of Thought,
The wide, warm halls where busy feelings move,
All that mars not God's image in the soul
May live, profaning not the sacred Past!
Thou hast loved once—forget not—but fear not
To love again—so it be worthily!

Don Alonzo. The Lady Viola ——

Gabriel. She?

Don Alonzo. Why dost start?
Tell me, why is it?

Gabriel. On *her* rests a curse,
Which, by God's blessing on my fasts and prayers,
I have discerned, spite of her spirit's foes.

Don Alonzo. Who are they?

Gabriel. Evil spirits, and one, leagued with such,
Human in passion, a fiend in power and malice.

Don Alonzo. The curse; what is it?

Gabriel. In her eye and lip,
And hand, are spells no mortal can resist,
Save by a miracle like that of old,
Which bade the sun stand still! And yet, her heart,
Inspiring love, cannot be *true* in love.

Don Alonzo. Thou madden'st me! O, heaven! Untrue, untrue?
Thou sayest, a curse;—is there no remedy?

Gabriel. This, too, by gift divine, I have discovered.
When she shall meet the man who in himself
Bears all perfections that have won her most,
And from her sight can charm away all else,
His love revokes the spell, and she is free!

Don Alonzo. O, for that power! Lives there so blest a man?

Gabriel. There shines a heavenly courage in thine eye,
And a strong charm of youth in all thy actions,
And in thy words a spirit-winning power,
That bid me hope, such triumph might be thine!

Don Alonzo. Then let me strive for it, 'gainst hell itself!

Gabriel. Canst thou disguise thyself?

Don Alonzo. Most readily.
It is my habit, under a student's garb,
To hide my knightly manners and estate.
Already, in yon castle of Algolar,
Twofold I have appeared; as yet unknown.

Gabriel. 'Tis well! Her guardian angel hath flown down,
Heaven-sent, to guide thee to her rescue! Listen;
Assume this priestly dress; push back thy hair,
So;——then, as in my stead, go visit her;
Attack her secret thoughts; win all her trust;
Then, as thou be'est a lover and a man,
Accomplish all the rest.—Do this to-morrow;
I promised, then, to give her farther counsel;
But, on some pretext of more urgent duty,
I send thee, my lieutenant. Dost thou read me?

Don Alonzo. I do, kind father. If this plot succeed,
Thy name on every fibre of my heart
Is written—and shall beat through every pulse;
Gabriel—my friend—my messenger from Heaven!

[*Exit* Don Alonzo.

Gabriel (*solus*). *Peace, battling heart!* This sacrifice is sealed;
Hard though it was to offer! Now, first waked
My heart from its dull dream of apathy;
First learned that it could feel, and leap, and throb,

In passion's agony, or passion's joy;
Now, in the vista of bright, possible things,
Shone love, an earthly heaven—still reaching on,
O'erleaping death, even to eternal bliss!
Yet this—Hope's paradise, I must abandon;
Shutting my soul up, like this gloomy cell,
Against the very light and breath of joy!
Then, be it so! Father, Thy will be done!
Yet pardon, if some natural regrets,
Some tearful dallying with soon parted hopes,
Make this day's prayers less calm! [*Exit.*

SCENE III. *A room in Algolar Castle—Enter* DONNA VIOLA, *and* DON ALONZO, *disguised as a priest.*

Don Alonzo. Daughter, thy brow is sad; is't ever thus?
Donna V. No; I am wild of spirit as the wind;
And, often, blithe as the brook's summer song;
But, now, the words of Father Gabriel
Have thrown a pensive shadow o'er my thoughts,
Though sad, yet sweet; I would not, now, be merry.
Don Alonzo. Ever more peace with sadness dwells, than mirth.
Donna V. O! I have heard, in my heart's silent halls,
Echoes as solemn-sweet as vesper-bells;
Voices that sound as tho' from heaven they fell;
And all do question me—"O wild, wild heart,

Why shake not off these foes that wreck thy peace?"
Think'st thou a curse is resting on me, father?
Else why, as though by angel ministry,
Such gentle and yet fearful warnings come?

Don Alonzo. Daughter, our whole race writhes beneath the curse
Which the arch-enemy won long ago.
He and his fiends conspire against us; yet
They can but offer curses for our choice,
To barter blessings with, if such we will!

Donna V. Needs it our will, then?

Don Alonzo. Aye.

Donna V. Then my own hand
Hath stirred the potion that doth slay my soul!
The witch, Ismena, darkly tempted me
With spells, to avenge me on a perjured lover;
Now, doth it prove my curse! Deep, subtle fiend,
O, be she doubly damned.

Don Alonzo. 'Tis so, I doubt not.

Donna V. Then is there hope for me? Pray, tell me, father,
This mesh of hell, can it be torn and scattered?

Don Alonzo. One, only, hath the power this to ordain,
And, by his instruments, to work thy rescue.

Donna V. Who—who?

Don Alonzo. Thy God.

Donna V. Him have I never known!

Don Alonzo. Yet hath he known thee—aye, and loved thee, too!

Lady, where slept thine eyes, thine ears, thy heart,
That, in all marvellous things of earth and heaven,
Thou ne'er didst see, hear, feel, and taste of God?
In all things terrible, His might is shown;
Through all things vast shines His infinity;
Yet, is it joy, where beauty moves and dwells,
To read the tale of His eternal Love!
In loveliness of the sweet, silent flowers,
Or morning melody of spring-wakened birds,
Or the soft light of stars amid the blue!
And, still more deeply have I learned of Him,
In His own chosen temple of the soul;
He, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain,
Dwells with the humbled and contrited heart!

Donna V. These words, I know are true;—deep, deep within me,

Unheard before, an echo answers them.
Yet, what am I to do, or speak, or think?
How learn to love, obey, and worship; tell me.

Don Alonzo. All this, and more 'twill be my joy to answer,

When a more fitting leisure waits upon us;
Till then—to thine own thoughts let me commend thee.
Now, for the pressing issue of this time.
It is the blessed task of human love,
To break the rough soil of the rude, hard heart,

That love divine may there take root, and flourish.
Therefore I ask thee—*hast thou any love?*

Donna V. Alas! here dwells the shadow of my curse!
As I should love, I love not any man;
But many passions war within my heart—
Like hydra-heads, each living, open-mouthed!

Don Alonzo. Doth none prevail, and rule above the rest?

Donna V. Nay, none. Threefold my monster-passion is.
He, whom I love alone, must be, in one,
Knight, poet, priest! O, were there such a man,
He were my dream! For these, and these alone,
And these together, can this wilful nature,
More fickle far than the unresting clouds,
Fix its firm tendrils on. Thou hast my answer.

Don Alonzo. O wild, warm heart! Would I had power like his,
Who smote the rock, that waters eddied from it,
So might I bid a spring gush forth for thee,
Which, through the arid desert of this world
Winding, might still surround thee with delight!
Such is true love.—If there be such a man,
Lady, thy prayers may bring him to thy side.
Ask it of Heaven; this night, on bended knees,
Tell me thy service shall be offered up!

Donna V. Father, it shall.

Don Alonzo. Mine join it then! Farewell.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *The gate of the Castle of Algolar—Enter from without,* KING PHILIP,—*and* DON ALONZO, *in priest's dress, from within the gate.*

Don Alonzo. Blessings be with the King!

King Philip. How! Dost thou know me?

Don Alonzo. Happy the man who knows so good a monarch!

I know you, as Spain's honor'd majesty;
And, in the name of Spain and of the church,
I ask to stay your present entrance here.
The lady of this castle——

King Philip. What of her?

Don Alonzo. There dwells a fatal sorcery in her eyes;
Flee from their fires, or they may burn thy soul!

King Philip. An idle tale! Art thou a holy man,
And think'st to fright me so?—If it *be* thus,
What care I for the fiends? Give me some charm,
Some form of prayer, to quell them. I *will* enter.

Don Alonzo. Yet one word more! The mission of our order
Giveth them frequent access to the court.
Read this despatch; 'tis posted from Madrid.

King Philip. Give it me, then. [*Reads.*

"As to affairs of war, the minister hath become suddenly unpopular; reasons for which, Father Francis discerns not

yet; he will consider it. Furthermore, in regard to the Cardinal Del Giudice, it is plainly proven that he hath plots against the king; and, on the advantage of his present absence, coins idle rumors to his injury."

What! does he so! The mitred hypocrite!
Priest, thou say'st well; I will to horse at once!
Back to Madrid—the *villain* Cardinal!

[*Exit.*

Don Alonzo. Thank Heaven for this! My bird of Paradise,
Thy fowlers all are foiled; thou shalt be free!
And, when free, mine; what bliss is in that thought!

[*Exit.*

SCENE V. *The Pyrenees, at night. Enter the Witch,* ISMENA.

Ismena. Come they not yet? Thrice hath my midnight watch
Out-looked these stars, and yet they answer not.
Hath hell its sabbath-nights? Or, have some fears,
Such as methought their nature scouted at—
Some holy incantations, good men's prayers,
Or aught more heavenly still, affrighted them?
I *will not* thus be left alone in evil!
Here, where they won my ruin, and have sought
With me to wreck a far more noble being,

Conquered or conquering—they shall join me yet!
Hear me, false fiends! Ismena calls upon ye!
Answer, if but in echoes! Speak again!

1*st Voice.* Again!

Ismena. Why are ye silent? Is our cause so lost?

2*d Voice.* Lost, lost!

Ismena. Can your fell craft and power rule here no more?

3*d Voice.* No more!

Chorus of Evil Spirits. All is conquered; let us flee!
Yield to God and Destiny!
In the life our breath had blasted,
All our curses have been wasted!
Pure thoughts dwell where crime had been;
Guileless love hath conquered sin:
Hell is baffled; let us flee!
Other prey more ripe will be;
Yield we to our destiny!

Ismena. Lost, lost, lost!—*Lost, lost!* [*Exit.*

SCENE VI. *A room in Algolar Castle.—Enter* DONNA VIOLA, *and* DON ALONZO, *in student's garb.*

Don Alonzo. Lady, methought Time had a spite against me,
So slowly moved his wheels to bring this day;
But, when I see thee, time and space are nought;
Thy charms are now, to me, the universe!

Donna V. Fair sir—in the horizon of my soul,
What storms have passed, within one little week!
I am not what I was; what I may be,
May Heaven direct!

Don Alonzo. Hath some misfortune happened?

Donna V. Aye, and good fortune too; too much of both!

Don Alonzo. If I might ask—

Donna V. Nay, I will tell thee all:
I need thy friendship.

Don Alonzo. O, wouldst thou call it love!

Donna V. A sudden provocation made this hand
The slayer of my would-be ravisher.
So much of evil: to tell thee of the good,
Would be to open out my inmost heart,
And mirror there new hopes of Heaven's mercy.

Don Alonzo. O, joy for that!

Donna V. The curse hath been discerned
That did so torture all my life to folly;
Its very source and root have been dragged out;
And now, it but remains, with aid of Heaven,
To plant fair love, and true fidelity,
Where erst had been most rank inconstancy.

Don Alonzo. Might I but aid thee!

Donna V. Thou mayst give me counsel.
If thou canst find the man who in himself
Bears all a knight's and courtier's dignity,
But hath a poet's heart, and harp, and tongue,

And yet to God is ever consecrate,
Wearing all holy thoughts within his heart,
Freely to give them voice—O, then, then, then
This riddle of my strange, unpeaceful life
Is read, and my heart's foes forever crushed!

Don Alonzo. Read, of *my* story, then, one little line;
Perchance 'twill aid thee to unravel thine.

[*Removes his student's hat and coat, showing a priest's dress underneath.*]

Donna V. Art *thou* that priest? Can then my prayer be answered?

Don Alonzo. Daughter, behold in me thy grave confessor.
Yet, lest thou fear the miracle be not perfect,
Wait one more change.

[*Throws off the cowl and gown, displaying an elegant knightly costume.*]

Now am I all myself!
Lady, thy faithful servant (in Spain's court
The Count Alonzo, kinsman to the King—
And nephew to the Duke of Bilbao),
Holds here, his proudest and most happy title,
Sworn lover to the lady Viola!

Donna V. Now am I happy; and yet so amaz'd,
I cannot tell the measure of my bliss.
Alonzo, I *did* love thee more than all.
And yet I would not, dared not, could not think it;
There was a secret magic in thy presence,

That—like the loadstone—ever drew me to thee;
And, as the harp of David did with Saul,
Thy voice calmed all my strange, unquiet thoughts.
I feel it;—that dark spell is all unwound;
The craft of evil spirits hath been baffled;
And I am free—and love;—*thou art my dream!*

Don Alonzo. Then let us, of these new and budding joys,
Suffer not Time to steal one precious leaf;
I go—to win our marriage of the King.
One short farewell; sweet—may it be the last!

[*Exit.*

Donna V. This, then, *is* love.—'Tis sad to have him go,
And yet that sadness troubles not my bliss;
For it is built upon his noble heart,
And tempests cannot move it.—O, Alonzo!
All the sweet sounds of the soft Spanish tongue
Cannot, together, make so sweet a word,
As that one name! Most brave and noble soul,
Be thou less great; show me some little fault;—
Lest I should worship thee; which my full heart,
New-pledged to love the God who made us both,
Would not quite do—yet hardly can do less! [*Exit.*

SCENE VII. *The same—Enter* CARLOS *and* HELENA.

Carlos. Didst thou hear, Helena, that our Silvio was not out of his bed this morning?

Helena. Why no; what is the matter with the old Cerberus?

Carlos. By my faith, he swears to more than I could believe, though my salvation depended on it.

Helena. I know thou art not given to much believing. If heaven were to be won by having a full faith in nothing, I warrant thou wouldst be the first to be saved. But, what said the old man of himself?

Carlos. He said ——— now I cannot tell thee just what he said, he hath such a quaint phrase of his own; but it was of this sort, forsooth:—That, at the last minute of the hour of twilight, yester-eve—

Helena. The Witch's hour?

Carlos. True—the White Witch's hour.—At that time, he saith, a terrible hurly-burly was heard without the walls of the castle; of which he, being a brave man, and having once served in the king's guard, was fain to step out of his gate, to discern the cause. Whereupon he, Silvio, saith that he was immediately stunned deaf with the noise; and was lifted up in the air by a sort of tempestuous whirlwind, which gave him no more eyes nor sense for anything, till it left him on the ground on the inner side of the castle wall, like an arrow-shot bird.

Helena. Thou amazest me! What can such a hubbub mean?

Carlos. He, simple man, interprets it (which he cannot say without making the sign of the cross to every word), that,

last night, the White Witch and her fiends took a long leave of this our castle, being, by some holy exorcism, quite overdone and expelled; and that all this noise and whirl did only indicate, that they would not leave without some sign of their accursed mischief and fiendish state.

Helena. Did the fiends say aught, as they fled?

Carlos. Only some words caught the old man's ear; such as—"left, left, left!"—and "twice two hundred years make the castle ours again, to the world's end accursed;"—and more of the like; which I, being somewhat of a sceptic in those matters, did not care to treasure up in my brain.

Helena. 'Tis strange, indeed! I would fain tell my mistress of these events.

Carlos. Go—tell them to her. But, for my part, be these things of the earth, or under the earth, I am glad of their happening. They shall serve us a good tale for many a Christmas night.

So may it live, in all Time's memory,
How True Love quells the mightiest Sorcery!

THE END.

Dc 1839
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